

## THE BULLETIN

### THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

**Winter issue**

**Greensburg, Indiana**

**January 1997**

**OCCASION:** Thirty-sixth Annual Dinner meeting of the Historical Society of Decatur County

**PLACE:** Greensburg Presbyterian Church, NE corner of the Courthouse Square.

**DATE:** Saturday, Feb. 15, 1997 at 5:30 p.m.

**DINNER:** By the women of the church. Dinner is \$6 each. Please reserve by check sent to Maurice Keith, 773 E. CR 200 N, Greensburg. Deadline for reservations is evening of Feb. 13.

**PROGRAM:** F. Gerald Handfield Jr. will give a program titled "What to Save from Grandma's Attic." Mr. Handfield is a member of the Indiana Commission on Public Records. He uses demonstrations, slides, and speaking to bring about this fascinating and informative discussion. Be sure to get your reservations in by Feb. 13.



#### THE CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

was certainly a success. Jackie Mendenhall, Marge Hunter, Ginny Garvey, Diana Springmier and Maxine Clemons did a fabulous job of decorating the museum for the holidays. Board members wives furnished cookies and Diana Springmier made her delicious cranberry punch. The musicians were absolutely outstanding!

The whole organization owes a vote of thanks to those who worked to make this special occasion possible for the members and for the community.

**THANK YOU!**

**EXCITING THINGS** are happening at the

museum. The wallpaper is being replaced, new paint applied and other impressive improvements that you will want to see when it's finished but you are also encouraged to stop in to see the work in progress. It is your museum. More about this happening in the next issue of The Bulletin.



#### **Welcome New Members!!!**

George Morgan of Clarksburg  
James & Wilma Parish of Westport



#### **NEW EDITOR FOR BULLETIN ? MAYBE...**

It seems that The Bulletin Editor Van Batterton wants to give up his job after many years putting out an outstanding quarterly bulletin.

At the same time, Pat Smith made it a definite that she does not wish to continue as corresponding secretary.

The two have agreed to change jobs, at least temporarily for Van until President Herb can find someone who would enjoy the job. Pat has agreed to work with Van on The Bulletin for a couple of quarters to see if she can do the job.

Pat sends the following message to members: "If the meetings are set up a year in advance, barring unforeseen complications, so that she can plan on a definite date for publication, and if members will write in lengthy articles or tiny bits and pieces, and if those out of town and county members will send small (or large) items about what they are doing now, what connection they have with

members and readers.

What do you think? Should we give her a chance? Pat's address is 122 W. Sheridan, Greensburg and she is looking forward to hearing from you.



Ernie Haston loaned the "possible new editor" of The Bulletin a copy of the Saturday, May 14, 1910 issue of the Greensburg Daily News. Pat will share some items of the paper with the readers of her column in the Daily News but believes readers of The Bulletin will also enjoy a few news stories or ads from the paper.

The Fair Store, run in 1910 by Roy H. Jones and John Worthington, was on the north side of the square and was advertising gifts for the upcoming commencement. "Havilland Plates make elegant gifts for girls at commencement, a special value now on display at 50 cents each."

A story on the front page read "On Friday the choir boys of Trinity church went to Clarksburg with Rev. Gallup to sing at the Presbyterian church social. They were royally entertained by the ladies of the church, who also sent automobiles for the party.

"Although a few of the boys were unavoidably prevented from going, the singing was much appreciated and James Caskey's excellent pianoforte solos were loudly applauded. Several numbers were rendered by the young people at Clarksburg which were worthy of the high traditions of the music of that neighborhood.

"Half the boys spent the night at Clarksburg, being entertained by Mrs. Fee, Miss Emmert and Mrs. Luther Hamilton, while other boys stayed with relatives. The boys thoroughly enjoyed their country trip."

George Morgan of Clarksburg recently became a member of this society so maybe he will tell us about the Presbyterian Church that was in Clarksburg. Where was it George? When did it quit as an active Presbyterian Church?

The Bee Hive Cash Grocery Co. "Both phones No. 7, (We pay 3 cents of what you spend) South Side Square" was asking in their ad "What is the population of Greensburg? One guess free with every purchase! 1st prize: One sack Pinnacle Flour 98 lbs., 2nd prize: 1 dozen cans Flag brand Corn {15 cents per can quality}, 3rd prize: 5 lbs our special blend coffee {20 cents per pound quality}.

Earl F. Gartin, "Farm and live stock auctioneer: New Phone, Burney, Ind." had an ad in this 1910 paper suggesting "See me before claiming date. Terms reasonable. Satisfaction guaranteed." Earl Gartin, whose daughters still live in our county was later considered the best livestock auctioneer in the country.



**THE FOLLOWING IS A CONTINUATION** from the fall issue of The Bulletin of the *Greensburg Daily News* story "Anti-Slavery Sentiments" printed in the Feb. 3-17 issues in 1914 and written by N.T. Rogers

#### **Starts Out in Quest of Friends – Gets Lost**

"After several hours waiting in the fodder-house the woman concluded that she had been betrayed, and knowing that there was a colored settlement in the neighborhood, left her children in the fodder house and started out in quest of friends. The night was dark, and she a stranger to the fields, soon lost her way and wandered.

"Leaving the woman and children for a time, the reader's attention is called to what was being

done by their friends.

#### **Tracked to Clark's Yard Gate**

"As soon as the fugitives were missed from the hut on Jane Speed's place (otherwise called the Peyton place), the colored people tracked them to Clark's yard-gate; they then informed Luther A. Donnell, who advised them to secure assistance enough to catch Clark's premises, so as to prevent the escape of the people, etc.

"Mr. Donnell then held an interview with my father and they determined to apply for a **Writ of Habeas Corpus,**

and, by legal inquiry, learn by what authority the fugitives were detained by Clark.

"By this time the darkness of night was setting in, when my father and Mr. Donnell applied to John Hopkins, then Associate Judge of Decatur County, for the required writ, which was granted, but it was found necessary to go to Greensburg to obtain the seal of the court, and the attendance of the sheriff to serve the writ. The sheriff was Michael Swope, lately deceased, who sent the writ to a deputy named John Imlay, then living in Clarksburg, with orders to serve it.

#### **Armed With Corn Knives, Clubs, Etc.**

"When my father and Mr. Donnell started for Greensburg I was detailed to look after the party who were watching Clark's premises. I found about twenty colored men assembled; they were very much excited and were armed with corn knives, clubs, and maybe more deadly weapons. It was with difficulty that I restrained them from making a forced search.

"At last the deputy sheriff came, and with him Robert A. Hamilton, to assist in the execution of the writ. It had been arranged to have the colored men rush, in a body, on to the sheriff's party, and take the fugitives by force, as soon as they should be brought out of Clark's house, but the search was fruitless, and we were all "chop-fallen" as it looked as though we had been outgeneraled.

"Mr. Clark was greatly offended, and said he would see some one through with this business. He went to Clarksburg and tried to get a writ from a Justice of the Peace, by which he could take the slaves to Kentucky, but of course, failed to get one.

"Mr. Donnell, R. A. Hamilton, myself and the colored people then held a council and decided to extend the search to the premises of the two sons of Mr. Clark, who lived one on the north and the other on the south side of the Clark farm.

#### **Woman Rescued--Children Lost**

"Meantime Mr. Donnell and myself went to Mr. Donnell's house to await developments; a short time before daylight one squad came and reported that they had found the woman near the premises of one of the Clark's. She was rambling about the fields in a state of bewilderment, and did not know where her children were. She told the story of her removal from the hut and subsequent concealment in Clark's fodderhouse, etc.

Of course, the colored men soon found the children, and the party was once more intact and with friends. The colored men took the fugitives down into their neighborhood and secreted them in a deep ravine on the Bull Fork- of Salt Creek, in Franklin County, intending to start them on their way the next night; we were greatly rejoiced at the turn things had taken, yet we felt assured that the slave catchers would press hard after their game, having once had it in their possession.

#### **Slave-Hunters From Greensburg in Dangerous Business.**

"R. A. Hamilton returned home as soon as the search was over. After remaining at Mr. Donnell's until the colored men had reported, I started for home and on my way there I met four or five men whom I know to be slave-hunters. Some were from Greensburg, and one a stranger; who, as I afterward learned, was a man named Ray, from Kentucky who owned the slaves.

A son of Clark's and one Hobbs had been to Greensburg for a writ to enable them to secure possession of the fugitives, and had given the alarm; all this while the woman and children were being found, and while I was at Mr. Donnell's, as before related. "

"I hurried home, changed horses and kept a watch over the movements of the slave-hunters; they went through Clarksburg and I went to Mr. Donnell's and reported what I had seen. He proposed that we mount our horses and skirmish around the Clark premises and the colored settlement, and observe what might transpire.

"We went to a horse-mill in the edge of the colored settlement; there we remained some time, but learned nothing more than there was quite a party at Clark's house.

"In the afternoon the slave-hunters made some demonstrations in and about the settlement, and did attempt to search one or two houses, but, finding it an unsafe business, they abandoned the expedition.

### **Woman Almost Helpless – Encumbered with Children**

"The colored people were naturally very much excited and determined. The woman almost helpless, encumbered as she was with her little children, the youngest of which was a nursing babe. They could not be moved around easily like men or adults.

"Now, there was a colored man and his wife who had recently moved from Union County to the settlement, and they had two children who were about the age of two of the fugitive children. This couple were in the habit of traveling to and from their former home with their children. Accordingly, they made a bold daylight trip with the slave-woman's children instead of their own children, arrived safely at the house of William Beard, an Underground Railroad man and a goodly Quaker who live beyond immediate reach of the pursuers.

### **Planning Successful Evasion of the Pursuers**

"But the woman and two children were yet to be disposed of, and about sunset word came that the hunters had discovered the whereabouts of the remaining fugitives, and again we were disconsolate; we reasoned that they would bring her to Clark's for safe-keeping overnight, and we resolved to try our writ again and see if that would not give us the possession of the fugitives.

"Meantime, we had assembled at Mr. Donnell's house for supper; while we were thus mourning over our ill luck, a colored man came and announced that matters were all right – that the man who was on guard had mistaken a party of men who were returning from a "raising" for the slave hunting party, but that they had passed by without observing the woman or her hiding place.

"Again our drooping spirits revived and we set ourselves to the task of planning the successful evasion of the pursuers. The route over which the Underground passengers were usually conveyed was through Laurel and Blooming Grove, in Franklin County, crossing the East Fork of White Water at Fairfield, and thence on to William Beard's in Union County.

"This line had been discovered by the enemy and was well watched, besides the excitement was running high and spreading wide, while our party were more determined than ever.

### **White Men Take Matter In Hand--Let It Cost What It Might**

"Heretofore we had depended upon the colored people to do the work, while we made the calculations, but Mr. Donnell's determination was now fairly aroused, and he proposed to me that we take this matter in hands and see the slaves safe through, let it cost what it might.

### **Colored Woman Disguised in Male Attire.**

Accordingly, we instructed the Colored people to disguise the woman in male attire, and for three or four of them to accompany her, mounted, and others on foot, to the Peyton Corner, where we would meet them. They executed the details promptly and were on hand in time.

### **A Dangerous Place to Enter**

"We found it necessary to press through Clarksburg . to reach the point we had in mind; it was a dangerous place to enter, as there were plenty of watchful slave-hunters there, so we instructed her to ride to the middle of the roads flanked by a trusty colored man on either side.

"We had the children taken around the village (Clarksburg) to a point about a mile beyond the town; the exit was easily made and the point reached; we then dismissed the colored people and resolved to keep our own council.

"The woman was mounted on the horse with one of us, and the children with the other, and in this manner, we rode through Springhill and to the house of Thomas Donnell situated about one mile west of that village. Day was breaking and Luther A. Donnell awakened his brother, Thomas, who assisted him to hide the slaves in an out-of-the-way-building, while I took charge of the horses.

### **Refugees Were Fed By Two Children**

"During the next day the refugees were fed by two children Of the Donnell family – one, Jane, has since gone to her final reward; the other is L. L. Donnell, of Springhill, since deceased.

### **Slaves Leave Donnell Home in Closed Carriage**

"Luther A. Donnell and myself returned to our homes with the understanding that we were to meet at the house of John R. Donnell near the home of Thomas Donnell, that night at ten o'clock, for the purpose of making final disposition of the fugitives.

"At this juncture we pressed Lowry Donnell and John R. Donnell into service. The latter entered into the arrangements with a hearty good will by bringing out his carriage, a fine one, with close top and side curtains, and assisting in the preparations.

### **Provided with Clothing and Doubled Veil**

"The woman and children had been provided with plenty of warm woolen clothing, and, being doubled veiled, were placed in the carriage and started on their way to freedom.

"The party was composed of Luther A. Donnell, myself, John R. Donnell, Lowry Donnell, Robert Stout and Nathaniel Thomson; the last two only went as far as New Salem, in Rush County."

### **Mother and Children Reunited – Reach Canada**

Mr. Hamilton continues the details of the journey, the substance of which is that , after a drive of 24 hours, with only a short rest to feed the horses, the party arrived at William Beard's, in Union County, and were kindly welcomed.

### **Chapter IX**

### **Return Home, Horses And Men Worn Out, Carriage Springs Demolished, Etc.**

The rescuers returned the next day with horses and men worn and fatigued, carriage springs broken and the experience of one of the most interesting incidents of the old "Antebellum" age, when freedom and slavery were struggling together for the mastery of our country, and we do thank Almighty God that it was His will that freedom could and did win the great and mighty struggle.

### **Woman Writes Letter Expressing Gratitude**

The woman found her other two children at the next station in Ohio, reached Canada in due time and, in after years, wrote to Mr. Donnell expressing her gratitude and great thankfulness for his assistance.

Luther A. Donnell's problems were far from over however, and in the spring issue of *The Bulletin* we will discover what happened next.



Roy Robbins, a Decatur County native now living in Sebring, Florida, became a member of the Historical Society of Decatur County in 1996 and is a welcome addition indeed. Roy was the subject of a 1994 story in the *Greensburg Daily News*' AGRI-NEWS page included in a series about antique steam engines, tractors and farm equipment in our county preceding the Power of the Past Festival that year.

A picture of Roy on a Model B John Deere, taken in 1936, was also printed with the article. Roy said the tractor was bought in Greensburg at the Corbett and Craig Hardware store in 1936 and that he, eight years old at the time, accompanied his father when the decision was made to buy the tractor.

Roy said the tractor was delivered to the 67-acre farm south of the center of population monument in 1890 and that it never left the farm until 1990. Roy's father, Courtland (Todd) Robbins died in 1953. In 1990 the tractor was restored by Tom Streicker and is now owned by Roy's son, Greg, and his family.



Lambert Dierckman has been instrumental in getting some great material to the society that was sent to him by Regina Barack. Regina wrote "Enclosed are the memorabilia that was sent to me by my old friend, Margaret (Unger) Kirk from Summerdale, Alabama.

"I found it all to be very interesting and I'm sure many Greensburg natives will be pleased to find the name of a long-ago friend or relative.

"If someone from the historical society has any idea who (or where) the young woman was, my friend would appreciate knowing also.

"Thank you so much for helping to restore a bit of Greensburg history to its original home. Regina Barack."

The material includes an invitation of the commencement for the Greensburg High School class of 1900 to take place in Central School Hall. Rollin Turner was president of the class, Stanton Guthrie, vice president, Sallie Wright, secretary and Ed Batterton, treasurer. Esta Robbins was the class poet.

This gift also includes an invitation from Miss Lelia N. Robbins to Miss Anna Buckley, Winfield, Kansas, mailed May 18, 1907, for the commencement exercises of Greensburg High School which would be held May 23, 1907 at the Presbyterian Church. There were 27 graduates that year - 20 female and 7 male.

There is also an invitation to Miss Buckley for the 1908 commencement, and an announcement of the wedding of Joseph Y. McNorton and Ida F. Newman, of Smyrna, Ind. who were married Oct. 8, 1902 at Indianapolis and would be at their home in that city after Nov. 1. Another invitation to Mr. and Mrs. Will Buckley was to the wedding of Serena Ethel and Charles Ernest Griffith on October 10, 1900 at 409 W. Washington Street, Greensburg. Serena was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Theis.

This gift includes a May 30, 1907 "The Greensburg Review," (more about that in a later issue), and a business sized card for "James E. McKim, Secretary of Privileges; Greensburg Free Street Fair, October 2-7, 1899."

There is a bill to Will Buckley, dated Jan 8, 1901 from R. T. Wright, dealer in Fine Footwear for ladies and gentlemen. For the whole year, according to this bill, of 1900 Mr. Buckley bought 11 pairs of shoes and one pair was returned. The total bill came to \$16.35.

There will be other information about this gift in Smith's column but in the meantime, can we

can help Regina and Margaret U. Kirk of Summerdale, Alabama discover something about the young woman who kept these papers for so many years?

Regina wrote that the papers were "found in a trunk which was purchased many years ago in southern Indiana. Margaret was raised in Aurora, Ind. and married Richard Kirk of Terre Haute, Ind."

The papers will be on display at the museum at some point but first they must be preserved so that more damage isn't done to them while they are inspected.



So ends the first effort of the "possible new editor" at putting The Bulletin together. Any suggestions will be very much appreciated and much serious thought, if done gently, given to any criticism.

Pat would like to see a "President's Report" and a "Corresponding Secretary's report" and a "Museum Director or Workers Report" included in each bulletin as well as "Rosalie Robbins's Genealogy Report" and you, no doubt, can think of other additions that might be interesting to experiment with.

Send in your dues, if you haven't already done so, to the P.O. Box listed below. While they are payable in January for the year, some have already paid. Yearly memberships are \$5 per person. Life memberships are \$100. Memorials and gifts are welcome. Be sure to make your reservations for the February 15 meeting.



### THE CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

was certainly a success. Jackie Mendenhall, Marge Hunter, Ginny Garvey, Diana Springmier and Maxine Clemons did a fabulous job of decorating the museum for the holidays. Board members wives furnished cookies and Diana Springmier made her delicious cranberry punch. The musicians were absolutly outstanding!

The whole organization owes a vote of thanks to those who worked to make this special occasion possible for the members and for the community.

**THANK YOU!**

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The two have agreed to change jobs, at least temporarily for Van until President Herb can find someone who would enjoy the job. Pat has agreed to work with Van on The Bulletin for a couple of quarters to see if she can do the job.

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### SOCIETY'S OFFICERS

President.....Herb Scheidler

469 E. Main,  
Grbg.  
Ph: 663-6804

1st V. Pres.....Tony Owens

2nd V. Pres..... Russell Wilhoit

Rec. Sec..... Diana Springmier

Cor. Sec.....Pat Smith

Treas.....Maurice Keith

### DIRECTORS

John Parker '97

Gene McCoy '97

Rheadawn Metz '98

Ruth Dorrel '98

Dan Anderson '99

John Westhafer '99

### Editor of Bulletin

Van P Batterton

525 N. Broadway

Greensburg, In 47240

### MUSEUM TRUSTEES

Jackie Mendenhall '97

Earl Vanderbur '97

Allan Beall '98

Marjorie Hunter '98

Virginia Garvey '99

Viola Minning '99

### MUSEUM CURATOR

Jackie Mendenhall

663-8277

### MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

Maxine Clemons

663-2135

### SOCIETY'S AGENT

William H. Robbins

### COUNTY GENEALOGIST

Rosalie Robbins

### COUNTY HISTORIAN

Pat Smith

Stanton Quinn, vice president, and Van P Batterton, treasurer. William H. Robbins was the class poet.

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There will be other information about this gift in Smith's column but in the meantime, can we

**MUSIC & ARTS IN THE PARK...an Experience of Discovery**

**Saturday, June 28, 1997  
9 A.M. to 6 P.M.**

**at Odd Fellows Rebekah Park  
(south of high school, east of library)**

**sponsored by the Arts and Cultural Council of Decatur County**

**Relax... Enjoy... Experience... Discover...**

**Performances by Barroom Bards, Batesville Jammin Jumpers,  
Frogs & Tarts, musicians, story teller  
Demonstrations by craftsmen  
Food vendors**

**Admission Free**

**Parking at High School with shuttle to park**

**DECATUR COUNTY**

**Greensburg, Indiana**

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**Life Membership — Richard L. Miller**



Have you ever thought that the museum would be more inviting in the warm months if it was **air conditioned**. It's going to happen and now more members and visitors will

## THE BULLETIN

### THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

Vol. 6, No 148,

June 1997

Greensburg, Indiana



SPRING 1997 meeting of the society: The museum of the Historical Society of Decatur County is pictured above with the new sign above the entrance. Since this picture was taken the evergreens at the front have been removed and flowers planted. Plan to tour the newly redecorated interior of the museum during the open house June 22, 1997 from 2 to 4 p.m.. Members of the Community Foundation will be special guests. Refreshments will be served in the Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall after the open house.

#### Index

Page 1: next meeting(above), thank you for gifts, life member Miller, museum to be air conditioned, new members,

Page 2: trustee resigns, Christmas ornament ordered, member's & Diane's thanks to decorators, George Morgan at work, memorials, new members, Feb. meeting,

Page 3: committees appointed, member Dorrel edits book, continuation of Underground RR from last issue

Page 4: continuation of UGRR from page 3, genealogy inquiries

Page 5: cont' of genealogy inquiries, correspondence from Jack Lines, local historian versus genealogist

Page 6: poem contributed by Betty Randall, Catalogue, Ind. Normal School 1870 - 78

Page 7: special thanks to Van Batterton, are you a tortoise?, membership blank

*Thank You!*

Thank You to Irene Kreiger, Bill and Marge Hunter, Marian P. Dunlap, Mrs. Wm. McCord, Al and Nancy Reynolds, Tri Kappa Sorority and Bob and Rheadawn Metz for their contributions to the society and/ or to the museum.



Life Membership — Richard L. Miller



Have you ever thought that the museum would be more inviting in the warm months if it was **air conditioned**. It's going to happen and now more members and visitors will

enjoy the building with cooler temps, not to mention those who work as guides. If you would like to **donate** toward this project, please get in touch with President Herb. Any donation will be welcome.

**Trustee resigns:** Morgan Miers has asked to be replaced on the museum board of trustees. Jane Keith has been appointed to serve in his place. Morgan took the position previously held by Allen Beale. How do we properly thank members, such as Morgan and Allen and the many others, who have given so much of their time and talents? A hearty "thank you" is about all except for each of us to commit to keeping the society as strong as it has been in the past, thanks to their efforts over the years. We know that Morgan and Allen will continue their interest in the society. (also see page 7)

**Tony Owens** has reported that the color and design for the society's **Christmas ornament** has been decided by the committee. It will be burgandy and have the Westport covered bridge on it and will be on sale earlier this year because several people have mentioned how nice it would be to have it here when summer guests are visiting, or to take to others as county residents visit others during the summer.

**Diane Springmier**, who headed the redecorating project at the museum, sings the praises of the volunteer work done by Russell and Nancy Wilhoit, Rheadawn Metz, Ann Westhafer, Sharon Wickens, Nancy Reynolds, Ginny Garvey, Jane Keith and the contributions of the Community Foundation, Gerald Levenstein, Jane Brown, Dottie Bilbrey and all who have contributed to the project. The society, along with Diane, thanks those who have worked and continue to work to make our museum even better.



I saw Clarksburg's **George Morgan** at the museum recently while he was repairing an organ (or maybe it was a piano) and he is willing to tell us something about Clarksburg in an upcoming issue of the Bulletin. We'll be looking forward to it George!



**Memorials:** McCracken, Sparks, Garrison, Fugit, Risk families by Geneva Risk; Kenneth Moulton, Florence Zoller by Sally Zoller Moulton (Mrs. J.K.); Kirkwood Christian by Virginia Christian; Mr. and Mrs. Joe Miller by Richard L. Miller



**New Members:** Frieda Baldwin, Dottie Bilbrey, Michael Conwell, John Dickerson, Hardin Feltcher, Velma V. Gee, Mary F. Goodwin, Margaret U. Kirk, Douglas E. Miller, M. Anita Rudolf, Mrs. Ed. (Margaret) Parker, William Parker, Reed and Ruth Schuster, Martin Swan, Don and Sharon Wickens



**F. Gerald Handfield Jr.** entertained more than 90 members and their guests at the 36th annual dinner meeting of the society held at the First Presbyterian Church Feb. 15. Handfield, a member of the Indiana Commission on Public Records, presented the program "What to Save From Your Grandma's Attic."

Handfield's job, taking care of the state's attic, includes preserving documents in the State Archives including records of the 600,000 Indiana veterans who have served in wars during the 19th and 20th centuries.

President **Herb Scheidler**, is in great health after a short stay in the hospital. Herb never stopped thinking about the society for even a minute and has appointed the following committees:

**Membership**; Dan Anderson, Joe Welage, Gertrude Kuntz, Mr. & Mrs. Bill Boone, Mr. & Mrs. Jim Doerflinger, Mr. & Mrs. Lester Gay, Mr. & Mrs. George Metz. **Investment**; John Westhafer, Bud Keith, Dr. Henry Martin, Mark Bailey, Paul Pank, Tony Owens and Dan Anderson. **Program**, Mr & Mrs. George Blare, Josephine Cory, Maxine Clemons, Mr & Mrs. Joe Westhafer, Mr. & Mrs. Melvin Robbins, Mr. & Mrs. Richard Rust, Mr. & Mrs. Bill Hunter, Mr. & Mrs. David Johnston. **Refreshments**, Pat Luken, Marian Hunter. **Displays**, Diana Springmier, Ginny Garvey, Nancy Reynolds and Ann Westhafer. Others will be added as members express their preferences.



**Ruth Dorrel** of St. Paul, Editor of "The Hoosier Genealogist" for the Indiana Historical Society, has recently edited "Indiana Source Book, Vol. 8 - Genealogical Material from the Hoosier Genealogist (1991-1992). This 64 page publication is a valuable resource for those exploring Indiana family history. Price is \$25. Material in the book includes Bible, marriage, estate, pension records, school enumerations, alumni lists, and obits and write-ups about old settlers' meetings from newspapers. For information call IHS at 317-232-1882.



**The following is a continuation** from the fall and winter issues of The Bulletin of the *Greensburg Daily News* story "Anti-Slavery Sentiments" printed in the Feb. 3-17 issues in 1914 and written by N. T. Rogers.

#### **Luther A. Donnell Indicted**

Without doubt the most interesting and exciting trial ever held in Decatur County – certainly the one that attracted the most general attention at home and abroad – was one that grew out of the transaction referred to in the above article. Luther A. Donnell was indicted by a Decatur County grand jury for "aiding and abetting the escape of fugitives from labor, etc."

Having lost their chattels and been defeated in their attempts to recover them the Strive owner and his sympathizers resolved to take the advantage offered by a State statute then supposed to be in force in Indiana. Accordingly, a few days later a grand jury of Decatur County indicted Luther A. Donnell, charging him with "aiding and abetting the escape of fugitives from labor, etc."

The case came up for trial at the March term of the court in 1849. Hon. George H. Dunn was presiding judge and John Hopkins and Samuel Ellis were Associate Justices, With the following named gentlemen composing the jury: Williams Magnus, Moses Rutherford, William McNabb, Henry S. Burke, Angus Forbes, Philip Ballard, L. F. B. Jocelyn, Benjamin Martin, Harvey Lathrop, James Mandlove, Eli Douglas and Daniel Misner.

The State was represented by John S. Scobey, prosecuting attorney, assisted by Andrew Davidson. The defense was conducted by John Ryman, of Lawrenceburg, Joseph Robinson and Philander Hamilton of Greensburg

On the calling of the case the defense moved to quash the indictment on the grounds

set forth in the case of Prigg vs. Pennsylvania, in which it was held that State legislation for the recovery of fugitives from labor in other States or for aiding in the escape of such was unconstitutional.

The motion was over-ruled and the trial proceeded. The evidence upon which the case seemed to turn was the positive statement of Richard Clark, (one of the sons mentioned,) who testified that the woman and children were placed in his fodder house about two o'clock in the afternoon of Monday, and that between three and four o'clock the next morning they were taken out by Luther A. Donnell and William M. Hamilton, which the reader will notice is widely at variance with the facts as stated in Mr. Hamilton's report and account.

In those days a man could not testify in his own behalf neither could a colored man testify in a case where a white man was interested.

There was conflicting testimony in this case; and the popular voice was seemingly unfavorable to the defense and the verdict was against the defendants.

Mr. Donnell appealed the case to the Supreme Court of Indiana, the result of which is here given in the words of the record:

#### **Donnell vs. The State**

Perkins, Judge.

Error to the Decatur- Circuit Court.

"This was an indictment against Luther S. Donnell, containing two counts, one charging him inducing the escape of, and the other with secreting a certain woman, of color, called Caroline, then being the slave of and owing service to George Ray, of Kentucky. The defendant was convicted. The section of the statute of our State upon which the indictment was grounded, according to the decision in Prigg vs. Pennsylvania, is unconstitutional and void. The conviction on it was therefore erroneous."

#### **Brings Suit To Recover Value of Property – Obtains Judgment For Fifteen Hundred Dollars, Which, With Costs, Amounts To Three Thousand Dollars.**

Encouraged by the advantages gained here in the criminal action, and by the popular clamor, Ray brought suit in the United States Court at Indianapolis to recover the value of his property, and obtained a judgment for \$1,500 which, with costs amounted to about \$3,000.

This was promptly paid by the defendant to the last dollar, and the whole amount was refunded to Mr. Donnell by the anti-slavery men of Indiana. and. Ohio, anti they were aided by a very great number of men who were not publicly known to be in sympathy with the anti-slave movement and with the Underground Railroad as well.

Thus ended one of the most exciting legal contests ever held in this part of the State of Indiana. The effect on the popular mind was decidedly unfavorable to the slave catching interest here and caused many who had before been indifferent toward the anti-slavery agitators to take a decided stand for or against that issue.

There will be more about the Underground Railroad in upcoming issues of The Bulletin.

#### **→→→→→ Can you help with these Genealogy inquiries?→→→→→**

Janice Connell of 6811 Villa Hermosa, El Paso, Tx 79912, sends the following inquiry: Information re: John Davidson family residing in Greensburg, Decatur County, in years 1835-1845. Married Mary DeMoss, children: Lucinda b 1824, James b 1838, Margarete b 1841, Emily b 1842, William Henry (Bud) b 1845. By 1851 they had gone to

Wapella, Iowa. Reply to Viola Gee, 4242 Greystone, San Antonio, TX 78233.

Also George William Brown, b April 1857 probably in Saltcreek Township, Stipps Hill post office. His mother is Eve Brown born about 1828 in Ohio with no father listed but a marriage record in Franklin County, Jan. 29, 1861, for Joseph Deilkes (Dilks) and Eva Brown shows her to be the widow of John Brown (or Johan Braun). There is a "blended" family in 1870 census in Saltcreek Twp. George's death record in Hart, MI shows his father as John Brown from Germany and his mother as Eva Weston from Ireland (?). Send information about this last inquiry to Janice (address above).

**And** – Want parents and place of burial of Catharine Margaret (Bowen) Johnston b. 15 Jan. 1830 d. 4 Feb. 1866; m. Wm. Samuel Johnston 31 Aug. 1851. Issue: Mrs. Stephen (Isabell S.) Fisher, Samuel Crawford Johnston, Laura May (Johnston) Dolph, Leah A. (Johnston) Bartlett – Mrs. Sandra Szikszay, 334 Smyrna Ave, P.O. Box 343, Clayton, Delaware.

Want parents, co. of birth or origin in North Carolina of George Fletcher. b. 1810 d. 1877 – N. Herndon Fletcher, 4964 Greencroft Rd., Sarasota, FL 34234.

Need confirmation that Sarah Fisher Higgs b. c 1776 d. Nov. 1830 was the wife of George Higgs b. c 1776 VA d. Nov. 1859 at Decatur Co. and was also the mother of Truman Higgs. Truman married Deborah Sullivan 4 Oct. 1835 in Decatur Co., is found in the 1840 Bartholomew Co. census and in the 1860 Sandcreek Twp. Decatur Co. census or the whereabouts of Truman in 1850 to prove that Sara Higgs b. 18 Aug. 1839 who married Wm. Henry Davis 13 Feb. 1858 was the dau of Truman. Frank Dickson, P.O. Box 957, Napavine, WA 98565.

\*\*\*

Correspondence from Jack Lines of Yakima, Wa states that the Lidzy Reunion will be held Aug. 1-3, 1997 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This family has connections with the Shelhorn family which figures so prominently in Decatur Co. history. (Victoria Tevis b 1857, Marion Co., Ind., daughter of Isaiah Marion Tevis and Sidney Shelhorn b 1822, Decatur Co., Ind. d 1864, buried in Star Church Cemetery.) Isaiah moved to Kansas in 1874 after he married the second time to Mary Jane Barlow (1st marriage to Elhanon Moberly) who was born in Decatur Co. in 1837. The Shelhorn - Shellhorn Genealogy is in the Greensburg library.

The 100th birthday of Bertha Coughlen Shelhorn was celebrated in Indianapolis February 16, 1997. Bertha was born Feb. 17, 1897.

key key key

The question has been asked why the society has both historian and genealogist. The state historical society asks that a local person be appointed from each county who is willing to pass information on to local historical society members and community. The **local historian** will try to find answers to questions about local history such as a recent inquiry from a 4th grader in Kouts, Ind. who wanted to know something about our county. The **genealogist** answers inquiries from those researching their family history. Genealogy is labor intensive and takes patience. I do it only when it is necessary for a local history story. Rosalie Robbins, on the other hand, enjoys the challenge. To me the two, historian and genealogist, are as different as night and day. Whenever I receive an inquiry about genealogy I pass it on to Rosalie.

**Betty Randall** of Hope, sent a copy of "**The Elusive Ancestor**" by Merrell Kenworthy which is a good example for explaining why I am the historian and Rosalie Robbins the genealogist:

I went searching for an ancestor. I cannot find him still.  
 He moved around from place to place and did not leave a will.  
 He married where a courthouse burned. He mended all his fences.  
 He avoided any man who came to take the U.S. Census.  
 He always kept his luggage packed, this man who had no fame.  
 And every 20 years or so, this rascal changed his name.  
 His parents came from Europe - they should be upon some list.  
 But these passengers to the USA somehow got missed.  
 No one else in this world is searching for this man.  
 So, I play a game of genea-solitaire to find him if I can.  
 I'm told he's buried in a plot, with tombstone he was blessed.  
 But the weather took the engraving and vandals took the rest.  
 He died before the county clerks decided to keep records.  
 No family Bible has emerged, in spite of all my efforts.  
 To top it off, this ancestor, who caused me many groans,  
 Just to give me one more pain, betrothed a girl named JONES!



The following was contributed by Ruth Dorrel.

**FIRST CATALOGUE, INDIANA STATE NORMAL SCHOOL 1870 - 71**

Thomas O'Byrne, Clifty P.O., Decatur Co., Ind., Charles T. Powner, Forest Hill, Decatur Co., Ind., Mary B. Powner, Clifty P.O., Decatur Co., Ind., W.L. Welsh, Greensburg, Decatur Co., Ind.

**INDIANA STATE NORMAL SCHOOL CATALOGUE, 1871-72 Senior Class, Section A:** Mary Belle Powner, Clifty P.O., Decatur Co., Ind. (Graduated from the Elementary Course, June 25, 1872)

**Junior Class, Section A:** Lida Powers, Spring Hill, Decatur Co., Ind., Charles T. Powner, Clifty P.O., Decatur Co., Ind., William L. Welsh, Greensburg, Decatur Co., Ind.

**INDIANA STATE NORMAL SCHOOL CATALOGUE, 1872-73 Senior Class, Section A:** Lida Powers, Spring Hill, Decatur Co., Ind. (Graduated from the Elementary Course, June 25, 1873), William L. Welsh, Greensburg, Decatur Co., Ind. (Graduated from the Elementary Course, June 25, 1873) **First Year** Lorenzo D. Barnes, Greensburg, Decatur Co., Ind.

**INDIANA STATE NORMAL SCHOOL CATALOGUE, 1873-74 Junior Class, Section A:** Lorenzo D. Barnes, Greensburg, Decatur Co., Ind.

**Junior Class, Section III:** Henrietta G. Dilman, Waynesburg, Decatur Co., Ind., Emeline Hedrick, Milford, Decatur Co., Ind., Bell Powers, Spring Hill, Decatur Co., Ind.

**INDIANA STATE NORMAL SCHOOL CATALOGUE, 1874-75: Elementary Course, Section III,** Belle Powers, Spring Hill, Decatur Co., Ind.: **Elementary Course, Section IV,** Ida T. Collins, New Point, Decatur Co., Ind., William R. Copper, New Point, Decatur Co., Ind., Charles B. Wise, New Point, Decatur Co., Ind.

**Elementary Course, Section V:** Susie F. Wise, New Point, Decatur Co., Ind.

**INDIANA STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, 1875-76, Elementary Course B. Seniors:** Lorenzo D. Barnes, Greensburg, Decatur Co., Ind., Kale L. Cassell, Greensburg, Decatur Co., Ind.: **Juniors, Section II:** Lizzie Dickey, Greensburg, Decatur Co., Ind.: **Juniors, Section III:** L.B. Griffin, St. Omar, Decatur Co., Ind.

**INDIANA STATE NORMAL SCHOOL CATALOGUE, 1876-77, Juniors, Section II:** Bell Powers, Spring Hill, Decatur Co.: **Juniors, Section III:** L.B. Griffin, St. Omar, Decatur Co., Ind.: **Juniors, Section IV:** J.V. Dodd, Spring Hill, Decatur Co., May Wiseman, Clarksburg, Decatur Co.: **Juniors, Section V:** Irwin Pressley, Spring Hill, Decatur Co., Belle Wiseman, Greensburg, Decatur Co.: **Juniors, Section VI:** Merit Webb, Adams, Decatur Co.

**INDIANA STATE NORMAL SCHOOL CATALOGUE, 1877-78**

**Seniors:** L.D. Barnes, Greensburg, Decatur Co.: **Juniors, Section I:** May Wiseman, Clarksburg, Decatur Co.: **Juniors, Section V:** Kitty Clyde Wiseman, Sardinia, Decatur Co.: **Juniors, Section VI:** James L.

Myers, Wintersville, Decatur Co.: **Juniors, Section VII:** Alvin L. Bailey, St. Paul, Decatur Co.: **Juniors, Section VIII** John McCain, St. Paul, Decatur Co.: **Juniors, Section IX:** M. Amanda Barnes, Greensburg, Decatur Co.

**EIGHTH ANNUAL CATALOGUE OF THE INDIANA STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, 1877-78**

**Seniors:** L.D. Barnes, Greensburg, Decatur Co.: **B Juniors, Section I:** May Wiseman, Clarksburg, Decatur Co.: **B Juniors, Section V:** Kitty Clyde Wiseman, Sardinia, Decatur Co.: Sarah Wiseman, Clarksburg, Decatur Co.: **B Juniors, Section VI:** James L. Myers, Wintersville, Decatur Co.: **B Juniors, Section VII:** Alvin L. Bailey, St. Paul, Decatur Co.: **B Juniors, Section VIII:** John McCain, St. Paul, Decatur Co.: **B Juniors, Section IX:** M. Amanda Barnes, Greensburg, Decatur Co.

**NINTH ANNUAL CATALOGUE INDIANA STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, 1878-79**

**B Juniors:** May Wiseman, Decatur Co.: **B Juniors, Section III:** M. Amanda Barnes, Greensburgh, Decatur Co., Kitty C. Wiseman, Sardinia, Decatur Co.: **B Juniors, Section IV:** Mary J. Moore, Sardinia, Decatur Co.: **B Juniors, Section VI:** Caroline Moodey, New Point, Decatur Co.: **B Juniors, Section VIII,** Alice Moncrief, Sardinia, Decatur Co.: Jane Terhune, Decatur Co.: **B Juniors, Section IX:** Evalyn Dowden, Greensburgh, Decatur Co.

**CATALOGUE OF GRADUATES CLASS OF 1872:** Mary B. Powner, Greensburg, Ind.

(Next Bulletin will include a list of Decatur Co. children admitted to Knightstown Soldiers' & Sailors' Home and Inst. for the Deaf and Dumb)



So ends Bulletin number Two for the new editor. After two of them I can say that it's an interesting job so I'll probably keep it relying heavily on Van Batterton as I, and many of us, have done since becoming a member of the society. Thanks Van for guiding us through the good and bad years for the society and for continuing to hang in there all these years. The society's members are grateful for everybody's contributions great and small but those who contribute year after year after year are truly bona fide treasures.



Some of us are as **slow as the tortoise** in getting our dues paid. About 100 people have failed to pay their dues for at least one year. Cards have been sent out but if you have not paid, would you send the **\$5 (per member)** with the form below to Historical Society of Decatur Co., Inc., P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240.

**Yearly Membership** .....\$5.(per individual).... Payable by January 1 each year,

**Life Membership**     \$100.

Name.....Address.....

City.....State.....Zip.....

Memorials, In memory of.....

Comments.....

*BYE FOR NOW*



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2nd V. Pres..... Russell Wilhoit

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Treas.....Maurice Keith

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### Editor of Bulletin

Pat Smith

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Greensburg, In 47240

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF  
DECATUR COUNTY, INC.

P.O. BOX 163

GREENSBURG, IN 47240

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# THE BULLETIN

## THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

**VOL. 6, NO 150**

**OCTOBER 1997**

**GREENSBURG, INDIANA**

Phil Jackson, who has written many articles for the Daily News about the Civil War, is scheduled to give the program for the historical society on Sept. 21 at the library. Unfortunately, the information came too late to include in the **Bulletin**. I can say with certainty, however, that Phil will give an excellent program. There will be plenty of advance notice in the Daily News and on WTRE-AM. It was nobody's "fault" but to make it easier for the notice of meetings to be included in the **Bulletin**, in the future, the day information is to be received by the editor and the dates the **Bulletin** will be mailed are listed below. This way members will know when to expect the **Bulletin** and there will be no doubt when material and dates to be included should be handed in. This way will be more fair to members living in other areas who cannot make it to the meetings but would like to receive the **Bulletin** on some kind of regular schedule. There will be no deviation from the schedule and nothing will be included, from any source, after it has gone to the printer.

The **Bulletin** will henceforth be mailed on the dates listed to the right. Material for the **Bulletin** should be received by the dates listed in the center. All material is welcome, modern or ancient history, and officers, chairpersons are encouraged to send reports. etc.

### **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:**

William F. Smith

Betty Secor

Mary Schmalenberg

John Schmalenberg

William A. Smith

IHS Library, Indianapolis

Jack Poore

Ruth Cash

Linda Spurling

Terry G. Wilds

**LIFE MEMBER: CAROL BONNETT**

**THANK YOU!** To **Earl Vanderbur** for his work on the fire truck, getting it to run after several years of rest. See MUSEUM NEWS ON NEXT PAGE.

### **GEE, I'M SORRY!**

THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE 1997 **CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT** REPORTED IN THE LAST BULLETIN WAS INACCURATE. THE ORNAMENT WILL FEATURE THE **MUSEUM OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY** AND IT WILL BE MATT, BURGUNDY, and WHITE PRINTING. IT WILL SOON BE AVAILABLE TOO! **TONY OWENS** IS IN CHARGE.

#### **deadline**

Sept. 5, 1997.....

Dec. 5, 1997.....

March 5, 1998.....

June 5, 1998.....

Sept. 5, 1998.....

#### **mailed**

Oct. 15, 1997

Jan. 15, 1998

April 15, 1998

July 15, 1998

Oct. 15, 1998



## MUSEUM NEWS by Diana Springmier

A special thanks to those who made the June museum open house a success: Jane Brown who pitched in and made sandwiches, punch, and served, Virginia Garvey whose wild flowers from Earl Shepard's and her own gardens were artistically arranged in the house and on the porch, cookie bakers, Pat Luken, Karen Wilson and Jane Keith, to Rheadawn Metz who baked and helped dust the house, Nancy Wilhoit who baked and helped husband Russell with the never-ending house and garden work, to Diana and to Carol Pumphrey for planting the profusely blooming flower beds with plants donated by Psi Iota Xi after their spring sale ended.

Van Batterton always keeps us abreast of how things are supposed to function-the clocks, the door latches, with some history of the house thrown in. George Morgan's playing-by-ear at the piano in the south parlor brought 215 North Franklin to life, resulting in a brief fox trot in the sitting room with Elizabeth Ann Smith and Rheadawn Metz tripping the light fantastic.

The museum was open after the July 4th Parade and Virginia's arrangement of red, white and blue graced the dining room table. Ruth Volk shared her bachelor buttons to give the bouquet its holiday blue. Russell hung the banners on the porch, trimmed the shrubs, and with Van moved the 1925 fire engine and the doctor's buggy to the front of the house to greet the 300 visitors who were visiting families over the 4th. Sharon Wickens with Diana's help spiffed up the inside before the opening.

Lois Laskowski's well-marked backyard herb garden is always well tended and has recently been enjoyed by many, a pleasant discovery by those walking the grounds.

Pat and Jim Smith have donated plaques in memory of John Olinger, long-time supporter of the museum.. They are mounted on the stone posts facing First Federal's drive through. That was unexpected addition to the grounds. Thanks to the Smiths for an appropriate and meaningful gift.

Earl Vanderbur repaired the clutch on the fire truck, John Curd donated time to change the locks on the house, and Bert Luken patched the brick on the north corner of the house.

Brian Ruble who painted the trim and the porches, voluntarily washed all the windows in the house, thus the list of those helping to make the museum viable and come to life goes on and on.

There is much yet to do, but the enthusiastic help of so many have brought the 1830 home to life. If you have a Saturday or Sunday afternoon to volunteer when the museum will be open from 1:00 to 4:00 call Jane Keith at 663-6451.



Mrs. Will Lanham's recipe for "Cheese Straws" that was included in the Omega Chapter of Tri Kappa's Cook Book in 1913: 2 oz. butter, 4 oz. Pinnacle flour, 1 egg, 4 oz. grated cheese, cayenne and mustard. Rub butter in flour, add other ingredients and mix with beaten egg. Roll thin and cut into small strips. Bake in slow oven for 10 min. Delicious served with salad.



John W. Dickerson sent a letter and some fascinating history about the Dickerson family. Most of his letter and a bit of the history follows: "I am a descendent of the Dickersons who lived (pg 3)

in Greensburg. My father was William K. Dickerson who was the youngest son of Tilford (Buck) Dickerson. I visited Greensburg nearly every year until I went to college (in 1938). At that time my three aunts lived in the old Dickerson home. I am not sure of which street it was on but it was only 2 or 3 blocks to courthouse square.

"Tilford Dickerson moved to Greensburg when he was 10 years old. He moved from Kentucky. He and his wife (Mary Jane Shook) had six children who lived to maturity. There were 4 daughters (Lillian, Kate, Dora (Duck), and Lottie) and two sons John H. and William K. (born Oct 10, 1872). Only Lillian and Lottie of the ladies ever married and only Lottie had a child. She was Mary Dobyns who grew up in Greensburg. She married Martin Schulz who taught music in some schools in the area, I don't know whether he ever taught in Greensburg or not. If alive they are both in Shelbyville nursing home suffering from Alzheimers. They had no children.

"John H. Dickerson was married but had no children. After leaving Goshen he lived most of the time in Lexington, Ky. After his wife died he lived in California and Greensburg. I have one sister (Jane Huestis) who also lives in Goshen. She has one son (William) living. He is married but has no children I am married (to Marguerite) and have 4 children (John W. Jr., Mary Ellen Nutleys James M. and Margaret Cullen) All except James live in Goshen (he lives in Arlington Tx). I have eight grandchildren. The 8 are the only descendants of Tilford and Mary Jane in that generation.

"The Dickersons were well known horsemen (I broke the tradition and sold insurance.) My Uncle John was about ten years older than my father. He left Indiana in the late 19th century and moved to Goshen. There he had several famous horses and was a well known driver. His most famous horse was Joe Patchen (later the sire of Dan Patch) Joe Patchen was one of three horses who raced in the Race of the Century at Yonkers NY Empire City Race Track on Sept 9, 1899. (It is now Yonkers Raceway and in danger of closing.) The race matched the three best trotters of the day and was won by John. The race is memorialized by an etching which is very popular and copies of which are sold in many forms at the Harness Horse Museum in Goshen.

"Unfortunately the museum is closed until July for a multi-million dollar expansion so I couldn't find out what is currently available. Incidentally both John and William are charter members of the Harness Horse Hall of Fame.

"My father followed John to Goshen several years later and worked for several owners. He took over the stable of Senator McCarty (owner of Joe Patchen) from Uncle John. He worked for several other horse owners. He was then hired by Edward H. Harriman (of RR fame) The stable was called Arden Homestead Stable. Upon his death Dad worked for his widow, then for their son Averill (famous ambassador to Russia etc.) then for Averill's brother E. Roland Harriman until my father's death in May 1948. The latter collaboration lasted for many years and there was a deep friendship between them.

"My father had many famous trotters and bought the famous trotter Titan Hanover. Because he was then in his seventies he had hired Harry Pownall to drive in the races. Titan was SO good he was barred from the betting in the Hambletonian (in other words- bettors had to bet on who would finish second!)

"I am enclosing some copies of clippings which might interest you. If you would like to get further information please don't hesitate to write or call me (914-294-7031). The Harness Horse Museum has traveling exhibits and displays which they share. If you are interested in contacting them, their address is 240 Main St. Goshen, NY 10924- phone 914-294 6330."

From the obituary of TILFORD (BUCK) DICKERSON from the Cincinnati Enquirer. (cont pg 4)

"In the death of Tilford Dickerson Indiana loses a valued as well as historic character, her best-known horseman. Throughout Indiana Buck Dickerson was known and appreciated for his sterling and rugged honesty. No county fair was considered a success unless Buck Dickerson took part in the races. Tilford Dickerson was born in Ky. in 1829 and with his parents moved to Versailles, Ind. in 1840. His father was a horseman and took great interest in runners.

"At an early age Tilford began riding, and soon became noted as the most successful jockey in SOUTHEASTERN Ind. At the age of 21 he embarked in the horse business, handling runners for a time but soon turned his attention to trotters and pacers. Of course, sulkies were an unknown luxury at this period and he rode the racers whether trotters or pacers. This new style of racing was an innovation to the Hoosier state. He may well be called the pioneer of harness horses, at least in Indiana.

"He moved to Greensburg in 1873 where he embarked in the horse business on a larger scale. He established a breeding stable and gave to the world the pacer Ben Butler and the trotter C.W. Wooley and in later years Gray Harry, Keller Thomas, Kelmout and hosts of others.

"He came from a family of horsemen and his two sons, John and Will, are now located in Goshen and are classed among the leading trainers and drivers in America. The former handles the flyers owned by Gen. B.F. Tracy, ex-sec. of the Navy, and the latter trains for Hon. John McCarty."

And more about Dickerson, along with an interesting bit of folklore that was included in the Greensburg Daily News following a series about Morgan's Raid.

(letter to the editor) "I saw in one of the Greensburg papers a notice of the old plank road in which it was said that John Morgan and his men, when making the famous raid, 'tore up the planks from the road.' Is this correct history? We do not so understand it here." Napoleon reader

"No, it is not correct history. John Morgan and his men, in that famous raid, passed through the lower part of this county and through the lower part of Ripley county, coming into Versailles from the south, crossed the old plank road and thence in a northeasterly direction to near Sunman. They had neither time nor inclination to tear up a plank road just for the fun of the work.

"Some little history in connection with their visit to Versailles is of local interest. The citizens of that town gathered in the court yard to await Morgan's arrival, with all the firearms they could gather together, expecting to give him a "hot reception," then sent out their scouts.

"Morgan appeared later with the scouts obeying their orders, captured prisoners. They went into the court yard, captured and destroyed all firearms, and then confiscated all horses, leaving their -worn out horses in their stead.

"The late Tilford L. (Buck) Dickerson resided there and owned several fine stable and speed horses, all of which were taken. Mr. Dickerson was mourning his loss when he heard one of Morgan's men say, "Hello Buck," and he recognized in the person his own cousin. This cousin accompanied Mr. Dickerson to the proper officer and got an order of release for all of his horses. As Mr. Dickerson expressed it there was one time when a rebel looked good to him." (Editor)

### **POLITICKING can be MIGHTY INTERESTING**

The following letter and the political bill on the right were received by Van Batterton in July 1996 from Calvin D. Davis, Duke University Department of History, Durham, North Carolina

Dear Mr. Batterton:

I am enclosing a copy of a document I recently discovered among tax receipts for Union and Decatur counties of the 1850s and 1860s which belonged to my great grandfather, John T. Davis.

This document is the 1864 Democratic ballot for Decatur county. It is apparent that this is only part of the ballot, for it ends with a comma after Assessor." Some one has written "John Keith" in pencil under that word.

The candidate for representative, John De Armond, was my ancestral uncle. He was a brother of James De Armond who built the De Armond Hotel, and Thomas De Armond, a Sardinia grocer who was my great-great grandfather.

Don Eubank has a similar Republican ballot from the 1920s which was among the effects of my late aunt, Mrs. Beryl Thompson. I think that such ballots could help with research into the history of Decatur county politics and result in articles for our history society's bulletin.

Sincerely,

Calvin D. Davis

Mr. Davis' suggestion that some articles about Decatur County's more interesting political elections is a good one don't you think? Surely some readers will be willing

to search their memories or do a bit of research and send the results on to be put in a future issue.

**BY THE WAY.** The election between Lincoln and McClellan was not close in the Electoral College, Lincoln winning with 212 votes from 22 states to McClellan's 21. In the popular voting, Lincoln's margin over McClellan was closer. The President received a majority of 400,000 votes in 4,000,000 cast. In the soldier votes, Lincoln won 116,887 votes to 33,748, despite General McClellan's popularity with the men in the ranks. Thirteen states provided for soldier voting, but the ballots of Kansas and Minnesota troops arrived too late to be counted.

In the local election, judging from what I could find out, the county must have gone very Republican indeed. It was a "spirited" election though, with several skirmishes between strong believers at many (ok, most) of the precincts.

#### McCLELLAN and PENDLETON

For Governor: Joseph E. McDonald

For Lieutenant Governor: Mahlon D. Manson

For Secretary of State: James S. Athon

For Auditor of State: Joseph Ristine

For Treasurer of State: Matthew L. Brett

For Attorney General: Oscar B. Hord

For Superintendent of Public Instruction:

Samuel E. Perkins, Andrew Davison,

James M. Hanna, James L. Worden

For Clerk of the Supreme Court :

Ethelbert C. Hibben

For Supreme Court Reporter : Napoleon B. Taylor

For Congress: Dr. George Berry

For Circuit Prosecutor 4th District: Creighton Dandy

For Common Pleas Judge, 11th District:

Wm. H. Carroll

For Senator: Dr. Wm. Bracken

For Representative: John DeArmond

For Clerk: Joseph A. Smith

For Sheriff: Jeremiah Dugan

For Treasurer: John G. King

For County Commissioner, 1st District:

Christian Seitz

For Coroner: Dr. Michael L. Daily

For Surveyor: J. Fleming Meek

For Assessor: John Keith

**ADMITTED TO THE KNIGHTSTOWN SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' CHILDREN'S HOME : SUBMITTAL**  
**RUTH DORREL**

**NAME DATE ADMITTED**

Ashcraft, Charles 1913  
Austin, George 1888  
Bailey, Harold E. 1914  
Bailey, James T. 1914  
Baker, George 1916  
Baker, Walter 1916  
Blanford, Jeffrey Alan 1981  
Broadus, Bruce 1890  
Broadus, Flora 1890  
Buller, Ardell 1893  
Burton, Goldie 1891  
Butz, James Ralph 1959  
Christie, Laura 1888  
Clemens, Sheila Kay 1973  
Clemens, Kimberly 1975  
Clemens, Samuel Scott 1975  
Cross, Janice Ruth 1984  
Cross, Mary Elizabeth 1984  
Cross, Jerry Allen 1984  
Davis, Jeffrey Gerard 1967  
Dean, Opal Maxine 1930  
Dean Robert Elisha 1930  
Elliott, David Ray 1974  
Green, Connelley E. 1901  
Green, Laura Elizabeth 1975  
Green, Rhonda Arlene 1975  
Green, Steven Ray 1975  
Haley, Dale Edward 1974  
Haley, Rhonda Dee 1979  
Hamilton, Lisa Lynn 1974  
Hamilton, Michael Lee 1978  
Heath, William 1893

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Hervey, Sherman 1888  
Hollis, Ernest Alvin, Jr. 1958  
Horsley, Frank Henry 1891  
Horsley, John 1891  
Hostutler, Clude 1897  
Hostutler, Sadie 1897  
Kolb, Leroy R. 1900  
LaDeaux, Charles 1977  
Shannon  
McCrary, Kate 1892  
McCrary, Morton 1892  
McCrary, Rosco 1892  
McCune, Charles 1889  
McNew, Richard Joseph 1934  
McNew, Vernon Leota 1934  
Parsons, Raymond 1974  
Parsons, William W. 1974  
Pitts, Geo. Leland 1932  
Pitts, Merle Hinga 1932  
Pitts, Olive Lenora 1932  
Puterbaugh, Harriet 1934  
Louise  
Puterbaugh, Ruth Anne 1933  
Puterbaugh, William Loy 1933  
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Suttles, Mary E. 1889  
Suttles, Noah 1889  
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Tatman, Mary C. 1897  
Tatman, Pearl A. 1897  
Vandusen, Herschel 1929  
Allason  
Vincent, Harry W. 1914  
Vincent, Russell H. 1914  
Wise, Don Wayne 1973  
Wise, Pamela Rae 1974  
Wise, Patricia Ann 1974  
Wise, Susan 1974  
Wise, Virginia Lee 1974  
Zacharias, Marily Sue 1974  
Zacharias, Mark Wayne 1974  
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Zacharias, Sherry Jo 1974

**DECATUR COUNTY PUPILS OF THE INDIANA INSTITUTION FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE DEAF AND DUMB FROM ITS COMMENCEMENT IN 1843 TO NOVEMBER 1, 1854**

NAME	RESIDENCE	Admitted	AGE	BIRTHPLACE
Alley, Enoch (1)	Decatur Co	1853	14	Ind
Alley, Mary	Decatur Co	1851	16	Ind
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Anderson, Esther Ann	Decatur Co	1851	9	Ind
Ford, Eliza Jane	Decatur Co	1849	10	Ind
Herrick, Stephen	Decatur Co	1851	10	Ind
Owens, Joseph	Decatur Co	1851	14	
Woodward, Mary M	Decatur Co	1850	10	Ind

(1) lost one eye, semi-mute  
(2) semi-mute

fall of 1918 on the Noah Dashiell farm on the north edge of Greensburg (west of North Decatur), an explosion occurred that some say was the worst explosion that has ever occurred in this county. Some of the newspaper reports are more than a little explicit.

✿ "EXPLOSION CAUSES DAMAGE AT MILROY" ✿

Plate glass windows in Odd Fellows Hall shattered by Nitro Blast Rushville feels shock.

That the explosion of nitroglycerin and dynamite on the Dashiell farm Wednesday night, in which Herbert Storms, of Bradner, Ohio, was killed, was felt distinctly in surrounding counties is shown by dispatches today. In many instances damage was caused.

Two large plate glass windows in the Odd Fellows' hall at Milroy were broken by the force of the blast and doors of several homes were shaken open. One report was that a chimney had been jarred from a house at Carthage, Ind. At New Salem houses rocked on their foundations, so great was the shock.

✿ "Parts of man's body are taken to widow" ✿

Ira Bird makes trip to Bradner, Ohio with remains of storm's victim of nitro blast. Ira Bird left last evening for Bradner, Ohio, taking parts of the body of Herbert Storms, age 28, blown to bits in the explosion of the nitroglycerin and dynamite on the Dashiell farm Wednesday evening. Only a few pieces were found, enough to fill a small shoe box. The widow requested that the pieces be sent to her. Mr. Bird is local manager for the American Glycerin Company.

James Dashiell, who has handled explosives for several years, in speaking of the explosion, said that he had hauled the explosive under extraordinary conditions and that upon one or two occasions narrowly escaped a blast. One time in particular he said a can of nitro was jarred and it splashed out and back without exploding. The explosive now is worth \$2.50 a quart."

Ten years ago (April 1987) the Bulletin carried William Parker's excellent account of several explosions in our county, including the "natural" one south of Waldron in 1890. It was caused by escaping natural gas as opposed to the one above being attributed human error.

### Poetry Corner

by Moe Jaffe & Dwight Latha  
contributed by Betty Randall of Hope  
I'm My Own Grandpa

It sounds funny, I know  
But it is really so,  
Oh, I'm my own Grandpa.  
Now many, many years ago,  
when I was twenty-three,  
I was married to a widow  
who was pretty as could be  
This widow had a grown-up daughter  
who had hair of red.  
My Father fell in love with her,  
and soon they, too, were wed.  
This made my Dad my son-in-law  
and changed my very life,

My daughter was my Mother,  
cause she was my Father's wife.  
To complicate the matter,  
even though it brought me joy,  
I soon became the father  
of a bouncing baby boy.  
My little baby then became  
a brother-in-law to Dad,  
And so became my uncle,  
though it made me very sad.  
For if he was my uncle,  
then that also made him brother  
Of the widow's grown-up daughter,  
who, of course, was my stepmother.  
Father's wife then had a son  
who kept him on the run,  
And he became my grandchild,

for he was my daughter's son.  
My wife is now my Mother's Mother,  
and it makes me blue,  
Because, although she is my wife,  
she's my grandmother too.  
Now if my wife is my grandmother,  
then I'm her grandchild,  
And every time I think of it,  
It nearly drives me wild,  
For now I have become  
the strangest case you ever saw,  
As husband of my grandmother  
I'm my own grandpa.  
It sounds funny, I know,  
But it really is so,  
Oh, I'm my own grandpa.

### Believe it or what?

Roy and Joleen Connor loaned a scrapbook that had belonged to Roy's mother. The book contains many "Believe it or not" stories of the 1940s and makes interesting reading. The following is an example: "At Rockport, Ind. there is (was?) a Paulownia tree that had to grow down to the ground. Its seed germinated atop an 18 foot stump." Has anyone been to Rockport lately? Also: "A goldfish with its tail cut off remained outside water for 11 hours and still lived." Owned by Mrs. Demetre of Indpls.

## SOCIETY'S OFFICERS

President.....Herb Scheidler  
469 E. Main, Grburg  
Ph: 663-6804

1st V. Pres.....Tony Owens  
2nd V. Pres..... Russell Wilhoit  
Rec. Sec..... Diana Springmier  
Cor. Sec.....Van Batterton  
Treas.....Maurice Keith

### DIRECTORS

John Parker '97  
Gene McCoy '97  
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Ruth Dorrel '98  
Dan Anderson '99  
John Westhafer '99

### Editor of Bulletin

Pat Smith  
122 W. Sheridan  
Greensburg, In 47240

## MUSEUM TRUSTEES

Jackie Mendenhall '97  
Earl Vanderbur '97  
Jane Keith '98  
Marjorie Hunter '98  
Virginia Garvey '99  
Viola Minning '99

### MUSEUM CURATOR

Russell Wilhoit  
663-8277

### MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

Jane Keith  
663-6451

### SOCIETY'S AGENT

William H. Robbins

### COUNTY GENEALOGIST

Rosalie Robbins

### COUNTY HISTORIAN

Pat Smith

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF  
DECATUR COUNTY, INC.  
P.O. BOX 163  
GREENSBURG, IN 47240

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Permit No. 53  
Greensburg, IN 47240

Mr & Mrs Shell Smith  
518 N East  
Greensburg IN 47240,

# THE BULLETIN

## THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

**VOL. 6, NO 150**

**OCTOBER 1997**

**GREENSBURG, INDIANA**

Phil Jackson, who has written many articles for the Daily News about the Civil War, is scheduled to give the program for the historical society on Sept. 21 at the library. Unfortunately, the information came too late to include in the **Bulletin**. I can say with certainty, however, that Phil will give an excellent program. There will be plenty of advance notice in the Daily News and on WTRE-AM. It was nobody's "fault" but to make it easier for the notice of meetings to be included in the **Bulletin** in the future, the day information is to be received by the editor and the dates the **Bulletin** will be mailed are listed below. This way members will know when to expect the **Bulletin** and there will be no doubt when material and dates to be included should be handed in. This way will be more fair to members living in other areas who cannot make it to the meetings but would like to receive the **Bulletin** on some kind of regular schedule. There will be no deviation from the schedule and nothing will be included, from any source, after it has gone to the printer.

The **Bulletin** will henceforth be mailed on the dates listed to the right. Material for the **Bulletin** should be received by the dates listed in the center. All material is welcome, modern or ancient history, and officers, chairpersons are encouraged to send reports. etc.

### **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:**

William F. Smith  
Betty Secor  
Mary Schmalenberg  
John Schmalenberg  
William A. Smith  
IHS Library, Indianapolis  
Jack Poore  
Ruth Cash  
Linda Spurling  
Terry G. Wilds

### **LIFE MEMBER: CAROL BONNETT**

**THANK YOU!** To **Earl Vanderbur** for his work on the fire truck, getting it to run after several years of rest. See MUSEUM NEWS ON NEXT PAGE.

### **GEE, I'M SORRY!**

THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE 1997 **CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT** REPORTED IN THE LAST BULLETIN WAS INACCURATE. THE ORNAMENT WILL FEATURE THE **MUSEUM OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY** AND IT WILL BE MATT, BURGUNDY, and WHITE PRINTING. IT WILL SOON BE AVAILABLE TOO! **TONY OWENS** IS IN CHARGE.

<b><u>deadline</u></b>	<b><u>mailed</u></b>
Sept. 5, 1997.....	Oct. 15, 1997
Dec. 5, 1997.....	Jan. 15, 1998
March 5, 1998.....	April 15, 1998
June 5, 1998.....	July 15, 1998
Sept. 5, 1998.....	Oct. 15, 1998



## MUSEUM NEWS by Diana Springmier

A special thanks to those who made the June museum open house a success: Jane Brown who pitched in and made sandwiches, punch, and served, Virginia Garvey whose wild flowers from Earl Shepard's and her own gardens were artistically arranged in the house and on the porch, cookie bakers, Pat Luken, Karen Wilson and Jane Keith, to Rheadawn Metz who baked and helped dust the house, Nancy Wilhoit who baked and helped husband Russell with the never-ending house and garden work, to Diana and to Carol Pumphrey for planting the profusely blooming flower beds with plants donated by Psi Iota Xi after their spring sale ended.

Van Batterton always keeps us abreast of how things are supposed to function-the clocks, the door latches, with some history of the house thrown in. George Morgan's playing-by-ear at the piano in the south parlor brought 215 North Franklin to life, resulting in a brief fox trot in the sitting room with Elizabeth Ann Smith and Rheadawn Metz tripping the light fantastic.

The museum was open after the July 4th Parade and Virginia's arrangement of red, white and blue graced the dining room table. Ruth Volk shared her bachelor buttons to give the bouquet its holiday blue. Russell hung the banners on the porch, trimmed the shrubs, and with Van moved the 1925 fire engine and the doctor's buggy to the front of the house to greet the 300 visitors who were visiting families over the 4th. Sharon Wickens with Diana's help spiffed up the inside before the opening.

Lois Laskowski's well-marked backyard herb garden is always well tended and has recently been enjoyed by many, a pleasant discovery by those walking the grounds.

Pat and Jim Smith have donated plaques in memory of John Olinger, long-time supporter of the museum.. They are mounted on the stone posts facing First Federal's drive through. That was unexpected addition to the grounds. Thanks to the Smiths for an appropriate and meaningful gift.

Earl Vanderbur repaired the clutch on the fire truck, John Curd donated time to change the locks on the house, and Bert Luken patched the brick on the north corner of the house.

Brian Ruble who painted the trim and the porches, voluntarily washed all the windows in the house, thus the list of those helping to make the museum viable and come to life goes on and on.

There is much yet to do, but the enthusiastic help of so many have brought the 1830 home to life. If you have a Saturday or Sunday afternoon to volunteer when the museum will be open from 1:00 to 4:00 call Jane Keith at 663-6451.



Mrs. Will Lanham's recipe for "Cheese Straws" that was included in the Omega Chapter of Tri Kappa's Cook Book in 1913: 2 oz. butter, 4 oz. Pinnacle flour, 1 egg, 4 oz. grated cheese, cayenne and mustard. Rub butter in flour, add other ingredients and mix with beaten egg. Roll thin and cut into small strips. Bake in slow oven for 10 min. Delicious served with salad.



John W. Dickerson sent a letter and some fascinating history about the Dickerson family. Most of his letter and a bit of the history follows: "I am a descendent of the Dickersons who lived (pg 3)

in Greensburg. My father was William K. Dickerson who was the youngest son of Tilford (Buck) Dickerson. I visited Greensburg nearly every year until I went to college (in 1938). At that time my three aunts lived in the old Dickerson home. I am not sure of which street it was on but it was only 2 or 3 blocks to courthouse square.

"Tilford Dickerson moved to Greensburg when he was 10 years old. He moved from Kentucky. He and his wife (Mary Jane Shook) had six children who lived to maturity. There were 4 daughters (Lillian, Kate, Dora (Duck), and Lottie) and two sons John H. And William K. (born Oct 10, 1872). Only Lillian and Lottie of the ladies ever married and only Lottie had a child. She was Mary Dobyns who grew up in Greensburg. She married Martin Schulz who taught music in some schools in the area, I don't know whether he ever taught in Greensburg or not. If alive they are both in Shelbyville nursing home suffering from Alzheimers. They had no children.

"John H. Dickerson was married but had no children. After leaving Goshen he lived most of the time in Lexington, Ky. After his wife died he lived in California and Greensburg. I have one sister (Jane Huestis) who also lives in Goshen. She has one son (William) living. He is married but has no children I am married (to Marguerite) and have 4 children (John W. Jr., Mary Ellen Nutleys James M. and Margaret Cullen) All except James live in Goshen (he lives in Arlington Tx). I have eight grandchildren. The 8 are the only descendants of Tilford and Mary Jane in that generation.

"The Dickersons were well known horsemen (I broke the tradition and sold insurance.) My Uncle John was about ten years older than my father. He left Indiana in the late 19th century and moved to Goshen. There he had several famous horses and was a well known driver His most famous horse was Joe Patchen (later the sire of Dan Patch) Joe Patchen was one of three horses who raced in the Race of the Century at Yonkers NY Empire City Race Track on Sept 9, 1899. (It is now Yonkers Raceway and in danger of closing.) The race matched the three best trotters of the day and was won by John. The race is memorialized by an etching which is very popular and copies of which are sold in many forms at the Harness Horse Museum in Goshen.

"Unfortunately the museum is closed until July for a multi-million dollar expansion so I couldn't find out what is currently available. Incidentally both John and William are charter members of the Harness Horse Hall of Fame.

"My father followed John to Goshen several years later and worked for several owners. He took over the stable of Senator McCarty (owner of Joe Patchen) from Uncle John. He worked for several other horse owners. He was then hired by Edward H. Harriman (of RR fame) The stable was called Arden Homestead Stable. Upon his death Dad worked for his widow, then for their son Averill (famous ambassador to Russia etc.) then for Averill's brother E. Roland Harriman until my father's death in May 1948. The latter collaboration lasted for many years and there was a deep friendship between them.

"My father had many famous trotters and bought the famous trotter Titan Hanover. Because he was then in his seventies he had hired Harry Pownall to drive in the races. Titan was SO good he was barred from the betting in the Hambletonian (in other words- bettors had to bet on who would finish second!)

"I am enclosing some copies of clippings which might interest you If you would like to get further information please don't hesitate to write or call me (914-294-7031). The Harness Horse Museum has traveling exhibits and displays which they share. If you are interested in contacting them, their address is 240 Main St. Goshen, NY 10924- phone 914-294 6330."

From the obituary of TILFORD (BUCK) DICKERSON from the Cincinnati Enquirer. (cont pg 4)

"In the death of Tilford Dickerson Indiana loses a valued as well as historic character and her best-known horseman. Throughout Indiana Buck Dickerson was known and appreciated for his sterling and rugged honesty. No county fair was considered a success unless Buck Dickerson took part in the races. Tilford Dickerson was born in Ky. in 1829 and with his parents moved to Versailles, Ind. in 1840. His father was a horseman and took great interest in runners.

"At an early age Tilford began riding, and soon became noted as the most successful jockey in SOUTHEASTERN Ind. At the age of 21 he embarked in the horse business, handling runners for a time but soon turned his attention to trotters and pacers. Of course, sulkies were an unknown luxury at this period and he rode the racers whether trotters or pacers. This new style of racing was an innovation to the Hoosier state. He may well be called the pioneer of harness horses, at least in Indiana.

"He moved to Greensburg in 1873 where he embarked in the horse business on a larger scale. He established a breeding stable and gave to the world the pacer Ben Butler and the trotter C.W. Wooley and in later years Gray Harry, Keller Thomas, Kelmout and hosts of others.

"He came from a family of horsemen and his two sons, John and Will, are now located in Goshen and are classed among the leading trainers and drivers in America. The former handles the flyers owned by Gen. B.F. Tracy, ex-sec. of the Navy, and the latter trains for Hon. John McCarty."

And more about Dickerson, along with an interesting bit of folklore that was included in the Greensburg Daily News following a series about Morgan's Raid.

(letter to the editor) "I saw in one of the Greensburg papers a notice of the old plank road in which it was said that John Morgan and his men, when making the famous raid, 'tore up the planks from the road.' Is this correct history? We do not so understand it here." Napoleon reader

"No, it is not correct history. John Morgan and his men, in that famous raid, passed through the lower part of this county and through the lower part of Ripley county, coming into Versailles from the south, crossed the old plank road and thence in a northeasterly direction to near Sunman. They had neither time nor inclination to tear up a plank road just for the fun of the work.

"Some little history in connection with their visit to Versailles is of local interest. The citizens of that town gathered in the court yard to await Morgan's arrival, with all the firearms they could gather together, expecting to give him a "hot reception," then sent out their scouts.

"Morgan appeared later with the scouts obeying their orders, captured prisoners. They went into the court yard, captured and destroyed all firearms, and then confiscated all horses, leaving their -worn out horses in their stead.

"The late Tilford L. (Buck) Dickerson resided there and owned several fine stable and speed horses, all of which were taken. Mr. Dickerson was mourning his loss when he heard one of Morgan's men say, "Hello Buck," and he recognized in the person his own cousin. This cousin accompanied Mr. Dickerson to the proper officer and got an order of release for all of his horses. As Mr. Dickerson expressed it there was one time when a rebel looked good to him." (Editor)

### **POLITICKING can be MIGHTY INTERESTING**

The following letter and the political bill on the right were received by Van Batterton in July 1996 from Calvin D. Davis, Duke University Department of History, Durham, North Carolina

Dear Mr. Batterton:

I am enclosing a copy of a document I recently discovered among tax receipts for Union and Decatur counties of the 1850s and 1860s which belonged to my great grandfather, John T. Davis.

This document is the 1864 Democratic ballot for Decatur county. It is apparent that this is only part of the ballot, for it ends with a comma after Assessor." Some one has written "John Keith" in pencil under that word.

The candidate for representative, John De Armond, was my ancestral uncle. He was a brother of James De Armond who built the De Armond Hotel, and Thomas De Armond, a Sardinia grocer who was my great-great grandfather.

Don Eubank has a similar Republican ballot from the 1920s which was among the effects of my late aunt, Mrs. Beryl Thompson. I think that such ballots could help with research into the history of Decatur county politics and result in articles for our history society's bulletin.

Sincerely,

Calvin D. Davis

Mr. Davis' suggestion that some articles about Decatur County's more interesting political elections is a good one don't you think? Surely some readers will be willing

to search their memories or do a bit of research and send the results on to be put in a future issue.

#### McCLELLAN and PENDLETON

For Governor: Joseph E. McDonald  
For Lieutenant Governor: Mahlon D. Manson  
For Secretary of State: James S. Athon  
For Auditor of State: Joseph Ristine  
For Treasurer of State: Matthew L. Brett  
For Attorney General: Oscar B. Hord  
For Superintendent of Public Instruction:  
Samuel E. Perkins, Andrew Davison,  
James M. Hanna, James L. Worden  
For Clerk of the Supreme Court :  
Ethelbert C. Hibben  
For Supreme Court Reporter : Napoleon B. Taylor  
For Congress: Dr. George Berry  
For Circuit Prosecutor 4th District: Creighton Dandy  
For Common Pleas Judge, 11th District:  
Wm. H. Carroll  
For Senator: Dr. Wm. Bracken  
For Representative: John DeArmond  
For Clerk: Joseph A. Smith  
For Sheriff: Jeremiah Dugan  
For Treasurer: John G. King  
For County Commissioner, 1st District:  
Christian Seitz  
For Coroner: Dr. Michael L. Daily  
For Surveyor: J. Fleming Meek  
For Assessor: John Keith

BY THE WAY, The election between Lincoln and McClellan was not close in the Electoral College, Lincoln winning with 212 votes from 22 states to McClellan's 21. In the popular voting, Lincoln's margin over McClellan was closer. The President received a majority of 400,000 votes in 4,000,000 cast. In the soldier votes, Lincoln won 116,887 votes to 33,748, despite General McClellan's popularity with the men in the ranks. Thirteen states provided for soldier voting, but the ballots of Kansas and Minnesota troops arrived too late to be counted.

In the local election, judging from what I could find out, the county must have gone very Republican indeed. It was a "spirited" election though, with several skirmishes between strong believers at many (ok, most) of the precincts.

**ADMITTED TO THE KNIGHTSTOWN SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' CHILDREN'S HOME : SUBMITTED  
RUTH DORREL**

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DUMB FROM ITS COMMENCEMENT IN 1843 TO NOVEMBER 1, 1854**

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Owens, Joseph	Decatur Co	1851	14	
Woodward, Mary M	Decatur Co	1850	10	Ind

(1) lost one eye, semi-mute  
(2) semi-mute

the fall of 1918 on the Noah Dashiell farm on the north edge of Greensburg (west of North Decatur School), an explosion occurred that some say was the worst explosion that has ever occurred in this county. Some of the newspaper reports are more than a little explicit.

💣 "EXPLOSION CAUSES DAMAGE AT MILROY" 💣

Plate glass windows in Odd Fellows Hall shattered by Nitro Blast Rushville feels shock.

That the explosion of nitroglycerin and dynamite on the Dashiell farm Wednesday night, in which Herbert Storms, of Bradner, Ohio, was killed, was felt distinctly in surrounding counties is shown by dispatches today. In many instances damage was caused.

Two large plate glass windows in the Odd Fellows' hall at Milroy were broken by the force of the blast and doors of several homes were shaken open. One report was that a chimney had been jarred from a house at Carthage, Ind. At New Salem houses rocked on their foundations, so great was the shock.

💣 "Parts of man's body are taken to widow" 💣

Ira Bird makes trip to Bradner, Ohio with remains of storm, victim of nitro blast. Ira Bird left last evening for Bradner, Ohio, taking parts of the body of Herbert Storms, age 28, blown to bits in the explosion of the nitroglycerin and dynamite on the Dashiell farm Wednesday evening. Only a few pieces were found, enough to fill a small shoe box. The widow requested that the pieces be sent to her. Mr. Bird is local manager for the American Glycerin Company.

James Dashiell, who has handled explosives for several years, in speaking of the explosion, said that he had hauled the explosive under extraordinary conditions and that upon one or two occasions narrowly escaped a blast. One time in particular he said a can of nitro was jarred and it splashed out and back without exploding. The explosive now is worth \$2.50 a quart."

Ten years ago (April 1887) the Bulletin carried William Parker's excellent account of several explosions in our county, including the "natural" one south of Waldron in 1890. It was caused by escaping natural gas as opposed to the one above being attributed human error.

## Poetry Corner

by Moe Jaffe & Dwight Latha  
contributed by Betty Randall of Hope  
I'm My Own Grandpa  
It sounds funny, I know  
But it is really so,  
Oh, I'm my own Grandpa.  
Now many, many years ago,  
when I was twenty-three,  
I was married to a widow  
who was pretty as could be  
This widow had a grown-up daughter  
who had hair of red.  
My Father fell in love with her,  
and soon they, too, were wed.  
This made my Dad my son-in-law  
and changed my very life,

My daughter was my Mother,  
cause she was my Father's wife.  
To complicate the matter,  
even though it brought me joy,  
I soon became the father  
of a bouncing baby boy.  
My little baby then became  
a brother-in-law to Dad,  
And so became my uncle,  
though it made me very sad.  
For if he was my uncle,  
then that also made him brother  
Of the widow's grown-up daughter,  
who, of course, was my stepmother.  
Father's wife then had a son  
who kept him on the run,  
And he became my grandchild,

for he was my daughter's son.  
My wife is now my Mother's Mother,  
and it makes me blue,  
Because, although she is my wife,  
she's my grandmother too.  
Now if my wife is my grandmother,  
then I'm her grandchild,  
And every time I think of it,  
it nearly drives me wild,  
For now I have become  
the strangest case you ever saw,  
As husband of my grandmother  
I'm my own grandpa.  
It sounds funny, I know,  
But it really is so,  
Oh, I'm my own grandpa.

## Believe it or what?

Roy and Joleen Connor loaned a scrapbook that had belonged to Roy's mother. The book contains many "Believe it or not" stories of the 1940s and makes interesting reading. The following is an example: "At Rockport, Ind. there is (was?) a Paulownia tree that had to grow down to the ground. Its seed germinated atop an 18 foot stump." Has anyone been to Rockport lately? Also: "A goldfish with its tail cut off remained outside water for 11 hours and still lived." Owned by Mrs. Demetre of Indpls.

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122 W. Sheridan

Greensburg, In 47240

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